United Nations A/C.5/56/SR.28

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 28th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 19 November 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Agenda item 120: Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors (*continued*)

Agenda item 121: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Agenda item 128: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)

Management of buildings (continued)

Private management consulting firms (continued)

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Visitors' experience (continued)

Development Account (continued)

Profitability of commercial activities (continued)

Information technology (continued)

Agenda item 126: Human resources management (*continued*)

Agenda item 128: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)

Organization of work

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01-64594 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 120: Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.6)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.6

1. **Mr. Elgammal** (Egypt) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.6, entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors". Since consensus had been reached on the text in informal consultations, he hoped that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

2. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) proposed that, for the sake of clarity, a reference to footnote 1 of the draft resolution should appear not only at the end of paragraph 1, but also in paragraph 2 after the phrase "contained in its report".

3. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.6, as orally amended, was adopted.*

Agenda item 121: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Agenda item 128: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)

Management of buildings (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.3)

Private management consulting firms (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.4)

Draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.3 and A/C.5/56/L.4

4. **Mr. Kelapile** (Botswana) introduced draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.3, entitled "Management of buildings: practices of selected United Nations system organizations relevant to the renovation of the United Nations Headquarters", and A/C.5/56/L.4, entitled "Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on policies and practices in the use of the services of private management consulting firms in the organizations of the United Nations system". Since consensus had been reached on both texts in informal consultations, he recommended that the Committee should adopt them without a vote.

5. *Draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.3 and A/C.5/56/L.4 were adopted.*

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Visitors' experience (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.8)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.8

6. **Mr. Fox** (Australia) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.8, entitled "Enhancing the United Nations experience for visitors", whereby the General Assembly would welcome the in-kind donation valued at $50 to $60 million offered by the United Nations Association of the United States of America to provide new facilities for visitors. Since the text had been agreed upon in informal consultations, he hoped that the Committee would adopt it without a vote.

7. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.8 was adopted.*

Development Account (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.9

8. **Mr. Chandra** (India) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.9, entitled "Development Account". The delegations participating in the informal consultations had adopted the text by consensus, and he recommended that the Committee should do likewise.

9. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.9 was adopted.*

Profitability of commercial activities (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.10)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.10

10. **Mr. Ivashchenko** (Ukraine) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.10, entitled "Proposed measures to improve the profitability of the commercial activities of the United Nations". He recommended that the Committee should adopt the text without a vote, since it had been agreed upon in informal consultations.

11. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.10 was adopted.*

Information technology (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.11

12. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.11, entitled "Information technology". The text before the Committee was the same as the one adopted by consensus in informal consultations, with the exception of some minor editorial changes in

paragraph 2. He hoped that the Committee would adopt it without a vote.

13. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.11 was adopted.*

Agenda item 126: Human resources management (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.12, A/C.5/56/L.13 and A/C.5/56/L.14)

Draft decisions A/C.5/56/L.12, A/C.5/56/L.13 and A/C.5/56/L.14

14. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) introduced draft decisions A/C.5/56/L.12, entitled "Use of consultants in the United Nations"; A/C.5/56/L.13, entitled "Delegation of authority"; and A/C.5/56/L.14, entitled "Young professionals in selected organizations of the United Nations system: recruitment, management and retention". Since the delegations participating in the informal consultations had reached consensus on all three texts, he recommended that the Committee should adopt them without a vote.

15. *Draft decisions A/C.5/56/L.12, A/C.5/56/L.13 and A/C.5/56/L.14 were adopted.*

Agenda item 128: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.5)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.5

16. **Ms. Dinić** (Croatia) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.5, entitled "Joint Inspection Unit". Since the text had already been agreed upon in informal consultations, she hoped that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

17. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.5 was adopted.*

Organization of work (A/C.5/56/1/Add.1)

18. **The Chairman** drew attention to a letter from the President of the General Assembly (A/C.5/56/1/Add.1) regarding the allocation of agenda item 169, entitled "Administration of justice at the United Nations", to the Fifth Committee, on the understanding that any decision requiring amendment of the statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal or relating to the establishment of a higher-level jurisdiction would be subject to the advice of the Sixth Committee.

19. With respect to the request made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the Committee's 27th meeting, the Bureau of the Committee had decided to recommend that, during the period of Ramadan, the Committee should maintain its normal working hours for its morning meetings but should hold its afternoon meetings from 2 to 4.30 p.m.

20. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, in principle, it was important to uphold the strict neutrality of the United Nations with respect to the different religions, cultures and governmental systems of its Members. However, he recognized that his Fifth Committee colleagues who fasted during Ramadan should not be penalized for fulfilling their religious obligations. Accordingly, in the interest of maintaining good and equitable working relations, he supported the Bureau's recommendation.

21. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee approved the Bureau's recommendation for the scheduling of afternoon meetings during Ramadan.

22. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/56/SR.29

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

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Distr.: General
5 December 2001

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 29th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 26 November 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 *(continued)*

Safety and security of United Nations personnel

Agenda item 134: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Agenda item 141: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

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01-65808 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Safety and security of United Nations personnel (A/56/469 and Corr.1 and A/56/619)

1. **Mr. Sevan** (United Nations Security Coordinator), introducing the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/469 and Corr.1), said that the tragic events of 11 September had demonstrated that security could never be taken for granted. United Nations staff members expected the Organization to take steps to protect them. As the Secretary-General had said before the Fifth Committee in May 2001, security was a fundamental requirement for the effective functioning of all United Nations operations. Without it, many programmes, such as those with humanitarian objectives, would be impossible to implement. Many details concerning security improvements could be found in the report of the Secretary-General on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel (A/56/384). The attention and resources given to the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session were already paying dividends. The Office had been able to reinforce its coordinating role in the security management system, and in some instances to reverse the trend towards the establishment of independent security initiatives by other organizations in favour of closer cooperation and coordination. It continued to present its security and stress management training programme to United Nations system staff around the world. By 1 November 2001, mobile training teams had visited 29 countries and provided training for some 8,000 staff members. Training appeared to be making a difference, for the number of staff members who had lost their lives as a result of malicious acts had fallen dramatically.

2. Security could no longer be seen as expendable; it must be a fundamental component of all United Nations activities and it should be planned and implemented with the appropriate care. Especially in the light of the events of 11 September, security structures and operating procedures needed to be revised and updated. A critical part of that process was the appointment of a full-time security coordinator at the Assistant Secretary-General level to head a separate and clearly identifiable organizational structure as proposed by the Secretary-General. He urged the Committee to consider that proposal favourably.

3. In section II of resolution 55/238, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to develop, in coordination with executive heads of the United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and funds, an effective mechanism for cost-sharing arrangements. Agreement had finally been reached and a proposal for cost-sharing was outlined in paragraphs 37 to 38 of the report. In broad terms, the agreement provided for field-related costs to be apportioned to participating organizations based on the number of staff they had in the field and for central management costs to be assumed by the United Nations.

4. Proposals to strengthen the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator consisted of three components, relating to operations in the field, operations at Headquarters to support the field, and overall management of security at Headquarters.

5. Accountability had been discussed at the most recent inter-agency meeting on security. While it had not yet been possible to develop a comprehensive plan in that regard, there was agreement on how to proceed. Over the coming months, his Office would be convening a working group to develop the accountability standards in greater detail.

6. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/619), said that the proposed total cost of strengthening the security of United Nations personnel amounted to $55.4 million. The costs would be shared between the United Nations, the specialized agencies, funds and programmes and other participants. The revised staffing table included a total of 338 posts, 38 of which would be at Headquarters, including those funded from extrabudgetary resources. The 63 additional posts referred to in paragraph 10 of the Advisory Committee's report would be recruited and managed by the respective specialized agencies, funds and programmes. Although the cost to the United Nations would amount to $10.4 million, the additional request was for $8 million, taking into account the resources already included in the initial estimates. The Advisory Committee supported the proposals of the Secretary-General and had made several recommendations regarding their implementation, which were contained in its report.

7. **Mr. Kennedy** (United States of America) said that his country, like all Member States, had suffered the loss of its citizens abroad. Since 1992, over 200 United Nations personnel had lost their lives in the field, and everyone had a shared responsibility to ensure that proper and effective measures were taken to limit further casualties. The report of the Secretary-General (A/56/469) was the result of a broad effort over the past year to create a more equitable cost-sharing arrangement for security management. The new arrangement allocated financial responsibility to all of the nearly 30 United Nations organizations that maintained a field presence. While it was a positive first step towards a stronger security system, many more steps would need to be taken, including the appointment of a full-time security coordinator, in order to guarantee the security of United Nations personnel effectively.

8. The current proposal provided coverage for only 64 of the 80 duty stations considered high-risk posts. Each of the proposed 100 field security officers would be supported by two locally hired staff members. His delegation questioned whether such an arrangement would be sufficient to provide field security officers with the necessary regional knowledge and expertise; it would like to see a more balanced staffing pattern throughout the 80 high-risk duty stations. In addition, it supported the establishment of a clear chain of command between the field and Headquarters. Many duty stations were staffed with security officers hired by United Nations agencies; in addition to the field security officers assigned by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator; that created a huge potential for confusion during a crisis and a high likelihood that standard procedures would not be followed. The Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator must provide direction to all security personnel in the field by providing standard operating procedures; that would be more cost efficient and would also enable security resources to be deployed more widely. His delegation also supported the recommendation for a security training unit run by the Office.

9. In his view, the plans for security improvements were fundamentally flawed by the report's failure to address the issue of accountability. It was essential to ensure that a mechanism was in place for tracking and enforcing accountability, from the most junior to the most senior levels, and that such a mechanism was both vertical and horizontal in character. Recent circumstances had necessitated rapid responses to crisis situations in the international arena and, as a result, standard security procedures had been circumvented in some cases. That was both dangerous and unacceptable. Security rules and guidelines must be established with the necessary flexibility to apply in all circumstances, and accountability was the key to holding the whole system together.

Agenda item 134: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
(A/56/431 and Corr.1 and A/56/510 and Corr.1)

10. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/510 and Corr.1), said that it recommended approval of the proposal in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/431 and Corr.1).

11. **Mr. Assaf** (Lebanon) expressed his country's gratitude for the efforts made by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to restore peace in the region, as well as its full support for UNIFIL at all political, administrative and financial levels. Despite difficult economic circumstances, Lebanon continued to pay its contribution to the Force in full and to provide duty-free access to imports for the exclusive use of UNIFIL.

12. He drew attention to paragraphs 25 and 26 of the report of the Secretary-General, in which it was stated that Israel had failed to pay the reparations required under a series of General Assembly resolutions to account for its premeditated attack on a United Nations centre in Qana in 1996. It was essential to hold Israel financially accountable to the United Nations for its actions; his country would hold consultations with the members of the Arab Group and the Group of 77 and China with a view to the adoption of the necessary resolution.

13. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said it was regrettable that a representative of the Secretary-General had not been able to introduce his report, since his delegation would have liked to ask for some clarifications. He expressed support for the comments made by the representative of Lebanon. Referring to paragraph 10 (c) of the report of the Secretary-General,

he expressed satisfaction with the balanced way in which the report dealt with the possible reduction of UNIFIL to a force of 2,000 troops. The original proposal of the Secretary-General, endorsed subsequently by the Security Council (S/2001/500), made that reduction conditional on prior consultations with Lebanon and the troop-contributing countries. The decision to reduce the Force to 2,000 would not be made with certainty until June 2002. The situation was, however, misrepresented in the report of the Advisory Committee, from which it appeared that the reduction had already been decided. He could not therefore support paragraph 11 of that report. His delegation would also have liked to see a clear reference to the Qana incident referred to by the representative of Lebanon.

14. Referring to paragraph 12 of the report of the Advisory Committee, he said that it was useful to bear in mind that, after the abolition of four Professional posts in the Mine Action Coordination Cell, the related de-mining functions would be outsourced to contractors. Since the de-mining programme was financed by voluntary contributions, it would be very vulnerable to a decline in such contributions.

15. **Mr. Adam** (Israel) said that he was disturbed by the politically motivated manipulation of the Committee. He hoped that no political elements would be introduced into the draft resolution on UNIFIL so that it could be adopted by consensus, in line with the Committee's usual practice. There was no precedent for a particular Member State's bearing sole financial responsibility for damage sustained by United Nations forces in the context of a peacekeeping operation. The cost of such damage should be absorbed by the general budget for peacekeeping operations, in accordance with the principle of collective responsibility. He recalled the comments made in that regard in a letter from the Permanent Representative of Israel addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2001/942) and in his delegation's statement at the General Assembly's plenary meeting on 14 June 2001 (A/55/PV.103).

16. **Mr. Assaf** (Lebanon) said that he regretted having to repeat the same arguments year after year. While other bodies were responsible for determining Israel's liability for compensating the victims of the incident at Qana, the Fifth Committee was entitled to call for the payment of the amount of $1,284,633, which had been recorded under accounts receivable for UNIFIL, to cover the cost of damage to United Nations property. That could not be termed a political issue. If the General Assembly set a precedent by requiring Israel to bear full responsibility for the damage, it was only responding to the precedent which Israel had set by deliberately bombing United Nations facilities.

17. **Mr. Alatrash** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that an attempt was being made to force the international community to support the continuation of aggression by forcing it to bear the cost of such aggression. He could not agree to take financial responsibility for what he viewed as deliberate terrorist acts against civilians and United Nations forces that had tried to preserve peace and security in the Middle East.

18. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said, in reply to the Syrian delegation, that paragraph 11 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/56/510) must be read in conjunction with paragraphs 8 and 9 of that report. Paragraph 8 mentioned the Secretary-General's proposed 31.3-per-cent reduction in total resources for UNIFIL. One component of that reduction, namely troop strength, was dealt with in paragraph 9, which noted the proposal that troop strength should be reduced from 4,543 to 3,613 by 31 May 2002 and then to the target level of 2,000 by the beginning of the next financial period. Paragraph 11 indicated that the proposed reduction of 17 international staff posts was not commensurate with those reductions in troop strength. The Advisory Committee had not made any adjustments to the Secretary-General's proposed total requirement of $136.6 million. However, it had indicated that it expected to receive proposals for further reductions in international staff for the period beginning 1 July 2002. Subject to that observation, it had recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposals.

19. **Mr. Yeo** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division) said that the Secretary-General had proposed the abolition of four Professional posts in the Mine Action Coordination Cell and their replacement with an equivalent dollar amount for contractual services. That did not represent a decrease in the level of assessed funding for operational demining activities; rather, it reflected the Mine Action Service's conclusion that demining expertise could be obtained more efficiently and expeditiously through the Office for Project Services. Operational demining of areas in which UNIFIL was active would continue to be funded from

assessed contributions, while other activities relating to demining, such as the creation of national databases, would be funded from voluntary contributions.

20. With respect to the treatment of the Qana incident in the Secretary-General's report (A/56/431), he felt that the issue had been appropriately highlighted in the English-language version; he could ask the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services to verify that it had been treated similarly in all the language versions.

21. In section III of the report and in the explanations contained in the annexes thereto, the Secretariat had made no presumptions as to what steps the Security Council might decide to take beyond the current downsizing measures.

22. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, while paragraph 10 (c) of the report specified that a decision on the reduction of troop strength would be based on developments on the ground, the assumptions contained in other paragraphs were not similarly qualified. He had raised the issue so that the text could be amended as appropriate.

23. He agreed with the substance of the section on the Qana incident. He would have preferred to see the issue addressed separately, as in the past, but noted that the practice of recent years had been to mention it among other issues in connection with UNIFIL. With respect to paragraph 11 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/56/510), he felt that, if the General Assembly shared the Advisory Committee's expectation that the troop strength of UNIFIL would be reduced, then the Department of Peacekeeping Operations must take that fact into account.

24. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) pointed out that paragraph 11 of the Advisory Committee's report concerned civilian personnel, not troops. The Fifth Committee could decide whether to approve immediately the expected staff reductions mentioned in that paragraph or whether to await future proposals made by the Secretary-General in the light of action taken by the Security Council. If the proposed phased reductions in troop strength did not take place, then the reductions mentioned in paragraph 11 would not take place either, contrary to the Advisory Committee's expectations. In other reports, the Advisory Committee had made similar observations on the need to take future developments into account. The Fifth Committee could either request the Secretary-General to propose further reductions in international staff or provide guidelines for the Secretary-General not to propose such reductions.

25. **Mr. Assaf** (Lebanon) said that the issue of personnel reductions would be determined not by the Fifth Committee, but by the Security Council. His Government's position was that United Nations operations in Lebanon should continue with all the current elements in place. The aim was not to increase the burden of funding United Nations troops in Lebanon, but only to ensure that every effort was made to support peace and stability in the Middle East, which was priceless.

Agenda item 141: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (A/56/487 and A/56/621)

26. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General's proposed budget for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) amounted to $722.1 million for the period from 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002 (A/56/487). The Advisory Committee, in its report on the subject (A/56/621), recommended approval of an appropriation of $692 million and a total assessment of $651 million, supplemented with commitment authority of $41 million. Details on those recommendations were contained in paragraphs 55 and 56 of the report.

27. The Advisory Committee had made comments and recommendations on a number of issues, including the management of wet-lease arrangements. It had commended the Mission for the measures taken to deal with the problems that had arisen in connection with wet-lease contingent-owned equipment arrangements, and had recommended that benchmarks should be developed to determine the capacity to strengthen the contingent-owned equipment verification process. That recommendation applied equally to all other peacekeeping operations. In addition, the Advisory Committee had questioned the proposed post reclassifications and transfers, which appeared to propose the upward reclassification of posts followed by the transfer of the same posts to other organizational units at their original lower levels. Accordingly, it had not agreed to all the proposed reclassifications. In paragraphs 49 and 50 of its report, the Advisory Committee noted the serious problems encountered

with contractor management. The Advisory Committee intended to follow up on the issue and to consider similar situations in other peacekeeping missions.

28. **Mr. Iossifov** (Russian Federation) said that, on the whole, his delegation was satisfied with the work of UNAMSIL, which was currently the Organization's largest peacekeeping operation. His delegation approached the question of the Mission's financing from the standpoint of ensuring the effective functioning of its military and civilian components and the successful implementation of its important mandate.

29. The proposed funding level of $722.1 million for the period from 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002 represented a 31-per-cent increase over the level for the preceding period. That large increase reflected the expansion of the Mission's military component, which accounted for nearly 70 per cent of its expenditure. The Secretary-General had also proposed the addition of 126 posts under the civilian component and the reclassification of a number of posts. He shared the Advisory Committee's view that not all of the proposed reclassifications should be accepted and that only 107 additional posts should be approved. He noted the Advisory Committee's recommendation that a thorough analysis should be undertaken of the losses caused by the logistical contractor's failure to meet its obligations, so that such situations could be avoided in the future.

30. He supported the Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations on the level of appropriations for the Mission. Nonetheless, he was willing to support possible further reductions in the proposed budget level, particularly with respect to the administrative component of UNAMSIL.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/56/SR.30

General Assembly
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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 30th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 28 November 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Safety and security of United Nations personnel (*continued*)

Agenda item 134: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (*continued*)

Agenda item 141: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (*continued*)

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01-66465 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Safety and security of United Nations personnel (*continued*) (A/56/469 and Corr.1 and A/56/619)

1. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, and, in addition, Liechtenstein, paid tribute to the courage and dedication of United Nations and humanitarian personnel who had lost their lives or been victims of crimes in the line of duty.

2. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Organization and its Secretary-General was a reminder of the vital role played by the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security. During the previous decade, the European Union had been working within the Organization to enhance the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel at all levels. Security measures were an essential function of the United Nations and must be coordinated under the authority of the Secretary-General, with adequate and predictable funding based on fair cost-sharing arrangements that encompassed the whole of the United Nations system. The European Union noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General had underscored the need to improve and strengthen coordinating mechanisms between the Organization and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes and that the culture of security awareness that was being promoted by the Secretary-General's personal efforts was beginning to have tangible effects.

3. The European Union would carefully consider the financial impact of the Secretary-General's proposals, which sought to meet the legitimate expectations of United Nations personnel for more effective protection. The proposals, however, should cover all high-risk duty stations. The Union endorsed the substance of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in particular the conclusions contained in paragraphs 14 to 16 of its report (A/56/619). The principle of shared financial responsibility in the coordinated management of the safety and security of United Nations personnel and the implementation of a coherent security policy throughout the United Nations system were the cornerstones of the security system. The European Union therefore welcomed the timely adoption of the necessary cost-sharing arrangements by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes. In order for those arrangements to work, however, the posts of Security Coordinator and Deputy Security Coordinator should be established as full-time posts and at an adequate level. Above all, participating institutions should ensure that their own security measures were consistent with the commitments they had entered into, were financially transparent, and contributed to the synergies and coherence of the common system.

4. The European Union shared the Advisory Committee's view that a prolonged discussion on defining clear lines of responsibility and accountability in ensuring the safety and security of staff would be unacceptable. The issue should be addressed expeditiously, taking into account Article 74 of the Charter.

5. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Organization should take all necessary steps to update its security arrangements and to provide adequate resources for its operational requirements, without reducing the level of resources allocated to other mandated activities, particularly in the area of development.

6. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the cost-sharing arrangements between participating agencies, funds and programmes and endorsed the recommendations contained in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Advisory Committee's report. It also shared the Advisory Committee's opinion that further efforts should be made to clarify the relationship and interaction between the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

7. With regard to the Secretary-General's staffing proposals, further information should be provided on the high-risk duty stations that had been identified, including a more detailed definition of such stations.

8. The Group of 77 and China noted with concern that not all of the additional posts that had been approved with a view to enhancing the safety and security of United Nations personnel had been filled and it hoped that action on the matter would be

expedited. Clear lines of responsibility and accountability in ensuring the safety and security of staff were an essential element of the Secretary-General's proposals, and the Group of 77 and China would welcome additional information on the subject. Lastly, the Group of 77 and China wished to stress that, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, United Nations personnel should respect the local laws of the host countries in the discharge of their responsibilities.

9. **Mr. Kendall** (Argentina) said that the question of the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel was a key item on the Committee's agenda, since it involved the very lives of those serving the Organization. During its term as President of the Security Council in 2000, Argentina had promoted the item and had contributed to the trust fund for the security of United Nations personnel.

10. The item was being considered against the backdrop of a tense international environment made worse by the attack the previous September on the city that was host to the Organization's Headquarters and by the often dangerous conditions under which the United Nations was required to undertake a growing number of missions. While the main responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations mission personnel lay with receiving Governments, the Organization must itself ensure that the security management system was adequate to the new challenges that faced the United Nations both at Headquarters and in the field and that adequate resources were made available to the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals for cost-sharing arrangements between United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes.

11. His delegation supported the proposal that the post of United Nations Security Coordinator should be established at the Assistant Secretary-General level and that of Deputy Security Coordinator at the D-2 level in order to provide essential leadership in security coordination and management. While it agreed in principle with the Secretary-General's proposals for new posts, a plan should be drawn up as early as possible to define responsibilities in the area of security, particularly in the field. Adequate funding should also be provided for continuous security training.

12. **Ms. Buchanan** (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Australia and Canada, said that action across a range of fronts was required to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel: resource and structural issues in the Fifth Committee, political and humanitarian concerns in the plenary Assembly and the legal aspects of protection in the Sixth Committee. The need to update the United Nations security management system, based on the changed security environment in which the Organization and its implementing partners now operated, had been compounded by the events of 11 September. United Nations personnel operating in the field faced increasing danger in the execution of their duty; 201 deaths since 1992 and 255 hostage-taking incidents since 1994 were grim testimony to that trend. She therefore strongly endorsed the need to implement measures to strengthen safety and security arrangements in the field.

13. While generally endorsing the conclusions in the report of the Advisory Committee, she drew attention to the need to include consideration of security at Headquarters, too. She supported the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator as a distinct and clearly identifiable structure, headed by a single Coordinator with comprehensive responsibility for security at Headquarters and in the field, but warned that the complexity of the task would require strong leadership. The new Coordinator, as the focal point for inter-agency cooperation, would need to display such leadership. Field operations must include activities designed to foster improved knowledge of the risks at hand, enhanced interaction with other humanitarian actors, and an increased sense of priority and responsibility on the part of host Governments. Priority should be given to the filling of new posts and the staffing of all high-risk duty stations.

14. She agreed with the principle of collective responsibility reflected in the cost-sharing arrangement proposed between the United Nations and participating organizations. The new formula was clear and balanced, and provided a built-in mechanism for review in July 2003. Nevertheless, given the sum of money and the number of organizations involved, the new system would need to be monitored carefully. Therefore she endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that an annual deadline should be established for receipt of payments from participating organizations and that the apportioned share of the

United Nations should not be exceeded without prior General Assembly approval. She agreed that a report assessing the progress and effectiveness of new measures should be prepared for consideration at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and supported the request for a review to ensure that complete security coverage was extended to all 80 high-risk duty stations.

15. The current proposals had significant budgetary, administrative and human resource implications and would require an unprecedented level of cooperation between organizations. She drew attention to the need for careful planning of accountability processes, lines of authority and effective coordination. The degree of cooperation shown in devising the cost-sharing arrangement must also be shown at both the strategic and operational levels. Lastly, sufficient funds and human resources must be released to underpin support for enhanced safety and security.

16. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway) said that the alarming number of recent incidents in which deliberate harm, including killings, abductions, harassment and illegal detentions, had been done to United Nations personnel was a matter of great concern. Even more unacceptable was the fact that those criminal acts had been carried out with almost total impunity. Indeed, in the history of the United Nations, only six persons involved in the violent deaths of United Nations staff had ever been brought to justice. The primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel lay with the parties to a conflict and with host Governments, which must see to it that those accused of violence against United Nations personnel were vigorously prosecuted. The international community nevertheless shared a collective responsibility for protecting those who courageously put their lives on the line in order to provide assistance and protection in areas of hostility and open warfare.

17. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's staffing proposals, including the establishment of the post of United Nations Security Coordinator at the Assistant Secretary-General level. It supported the Advisory Committee's call, however, for a review of high-risk duty stations to ensure complete coverage for all such duty stations, and shared the opinion that further efforts should be made to clarify the relationship and interaction between the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It was also important to define clear lines of responsibility and accountability in ensuring the safety and security of staff, and to establish a clear chain of command between Headquarters and the field. Moreover, responsibility for security policies should be centralized within the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and those policies should be observed by all organizations of the United Nations system. A report on the progress achieved in that regard should be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

18. Continuous training was crucial to the success of any security operation and her delegation therefore supported the establishment of a Security Training Unit. Lastly, her delegation welcomed the new and more equitable cost-sharing arrangements for the United Nations security management system and supported the Advisory Committee's request that the Secretary-General should report on the experience related to the implementation of the agreement.

19. **Mr. Chandra** (India) said that the safety and security of United Nations personnel were a matter of great importance to his delegation. It welcomed the cost-sharing arrangements for the United Nations security management system and would work with like-minded delegations on measures to enhance the safety and security of United Nations personnel. He was confident that the Committee's concerns would be reflected in the draft resolution to be adopted on the item.

20. **Mr. Elgammal** (Egypt) said that his delegation's position had already been expressed in the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. After listening to the statements by the representatives of Belgium, speaking on behalf of the European Union, and of Norway, however, he wished to voice his concern at the introduction of the concept of "associated personnel". The Committee was considering the Secretary-General's proposals for strengthening security arrangements for United Nations personnel and the budgetary implications of those proposals, and he hoped that it would not be distracted by a discussion of the concept of "associated personnel".

21. **Mr. Sevan** (United Nations Security Coordinator) said that the Committee's discussion of the current item

would serve not only to enhance the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the field but also to boost the morale of all staff, who for too long had heard much talk on the subject but seen little action.

22. He had taken note of the concerns that had been expressed. On the subject of high-risk duty stations, the number of such stations must be kept under constant review, since areas that were currently quiet could suddenly become dangerous. Situations were never static and it was possible that the Secretary-General might return to the Committee at a later stage with a request for additional funding. He himself would be leaving office at the end of the current year and it was a matter of great personal satisfaction that increased budgetary and staffing resources would be available to his successor. He wished to thank the members of the Committee for the support they had given him during his term of office.

23. **The Chairman** thanked the Security Coordinator for his contribution to the work of the Committee during his term of office.

Agenda item 134: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (*continued*) (A/56/431 and Corr.1, A/56/510 and Corr.1)

24. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, and, in addition, Norway, said it was regrettable that the reports on financing proposals had not been submitted within the relevant deadlines. He welcomed the proposal in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/431 and Corr.1) that the budget for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should be reduced by 31 per cent in relation to the budget for the previous period, and endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in its report (A/56/510 and Corr.1).

Agenda item 141: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (*continued*) (A/56/487 and A/56/621)

25. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was the largest and most complex peacekeeping operation that the United Nations had ever carried out, and the budget proposal by the Secretary-General represented a 31.3 per cent increase in relation to the budget for the financial period 2000-2001. The European Union shared the doubts expressed by the Advisory Committee about the capacity of the Mission to commit and use all the resources that had been requested. He noted that as of 16 October 2001, $41.3 million of a total authorized budget of $275 million for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2001 remained unspent. Consequently, he would appreciate an explanation from the Secretary-General of the reason for the request for a further $86 million for the following period. It would also be useful to synchronize the mandates of peacekeeping operations with the budgetary cycle, since the current policy complicated the process of predicting expenditure for Member States.

26. The European Union had already expressed its concerns regarding certain operational aspects of UNAMSIL, including its structure and management, during the fifty-sixth session. The Mission still appeared to have considerable staffing and recruitment problems and he expressed concern over the high vacancy rates: 14.7 per cent for international staff and 17.1 per cent for local staff. In the light of those statistics, he questioned the need for the creation of additional posts. It would also be necessary to examine very carefully the reclassification proposals, as well as the policy on gender parity both within UNAMSIL and in operations in the field. There had always been difficulties with both wet-leasing and self-sustainment. The slow pace of processing claims for contingent-owned equipment was probably partially due to the inadequacy of resources for the verifications process in the field; it would be useful to consider whether that problem was linked to the vacancy rate. There had also been lengthy delays in concluding memoranda of understanding. He understood that the estimated total of $86.3 million for contingent-owned material did not include the reimbursement of troop-contributing countries which already had troops in the field but which had yet to begin negotiations for memoranda of understanding. Without a review of the memoranda of understanding, the United Nations might assume responsibility for functions which were supposedly covered by the contingents, and that might lead to duplication. His delegation welcomed the efforts made to resolve those difficulties.

27. He expressed satisfaction at the termination of the logistical contract referred to in paragraph 39 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/487). Drawing attention to paragraphs 49 and 50 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/621), he said that situations of that kind ran contrary to the efforts of the Secretary-General and the General Assembly to carry out the budgetary and administrative reform of the Organization and illustrated the importance of respect for resolutions 55/232 and 55/247. It was important for all concerned to learn from the mistakes of the past. Noting that the Mission had recently been equipped with an "executive" jet aircraft, he drew attention to the Advisory Committee's report of the previous year (A/55/839), in which it had urged the Secretary-General to seek other commercial arrangements, since private means of transport should not be considered a priority. He would also appreciate details from the Secretariat of the progress made by UNAMSIL in implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors contained in its report (A/55/5). He asked whether more information could be given regarding measures taken by UNAMSIL to respond to the conclusions of the internal auditors which were referred to briefly in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) (A/56/381), particularly concerning deficiencies in the management of service contracts, and internal control in procurement, financial management, travel, leave and attendance, property management and transport operations. OIOS had carried out a study into subsistence allowance rates and found that those of UNAMSIL and six other missions were excessive. The rates should be revised and the revised rates should be applied during the development of the new budget arrangements. A withdrawal strategy for UNAMSIL should also be considered, bearing in mind the developments in the field and the return to a political process in the country.

28. He emphasized that the rigorous examination of the management deficiencies of UNAMSIL did not detract from the importance that the European Union attached to the operation and to its central role in the stabilization of Sierra Leone. The problems were not confined to UNAMSIL, and illustrated the urgent need for reform of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The reforms should be both qualitative and quantitative, and designed not only to resolve the deficiencies in personnel structure, but also to change the culture of management in that Department.

29. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) asked why the report of the Secretary-General under agenda item 141 had not been introduced by a representative of the Secretary-General. It was inappropriate for the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to introduce such a report. His delegation intended to take up the matter with the Secretariat.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/56/SR.31

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Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Administrative expenses of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

Request for a subvention to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research resulting from the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the Institute on the work programme of the Institute for 2002

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47: The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.6/Rev.1, as orally revised: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.31: Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination

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Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.26: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.7: Special session of the General Assembly on children

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/56/3 (chaps. I, VII (sections B and C) and IX))

1. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to consider chapters I, VII (sections B and C) and IX of the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2001 (A/56/3), which had been allocated to the Fifth Committee.

2. He said that he took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of those chapters.

3. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Administrative expenses of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (A/56/7/Add.1 and A/56/289)

4. **Mr. Larivière** (Chairman of the Standing Committee of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board), introducing the report of the Standing Committee on the administrative expenses of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (A/56/289), drew attention to paragraphs 1 to 18, which set out the arrangements for the report's submission to the General Assembly and contained information on the Fund's administrative and financial operations. There were currently 19 member organizations in the Fund and more than 122,500 active participants and beneficiaries. Over the past 10 years, the number of beneficiaries had increased at an average rate of about 4.5 per cent per annum. Total benefit payments exceeded $1 billion per annum. The market value of the assets of the Fund, which had reached a record high of $26.3 billion on 27 March 2000, currently stood at about $22 billion.

5. As indicated in paragraph 4 of the report, the administrative expenses of the Fund were separated into three components: administrative costs, investment costs and audit costs. The expenses borne by the Fund and those charged to the United Nations, under the cost-sharing arrangements approved by the General Assembly, were described in paragraphs 6 to 18.

6. The Standing Committee had approved for submission to the General Assembly revised budget estimates for the biennium 2000-2001 amounting to $59,202,200; that represented a net saving of slightly over $3 million compared with the estimates approved in 2000, savings of $3,694,900 realized under investment costs, having been partially offset by additional resource requirements, in the amount of $596,000, relating to administrative costs for phase I of the Fund's re-engineering project. The savings were largely attributable to the fact that the fees for the custodian and master record keeper had been negotiated after the biennial budget for 2000-2001 had been approved. The initial appropriations had provided for fees based on the market value of the assets and on the volume of the transactions, which were all variable, whereas the fees that had eventually been negotiated were based on flat dollar amounts.

7. The budget estimates for the biennium 2002-2003 were summarized in paragraphs 34 to 45 of the report and followed, to the extent possible, the United Nations budget presentation format. There had been an extensive exchange of views on the budget proposal among the three constituent groups of the Standing Committee, which had led to the establishment of an in-session Working Group. The consensus conclusions reached by the Working Group, which had been accepted by the Standing Committee, were set out in paragraph 26 of annex IV to the report. The Working Group had, inter alia, expressed its full support for the Chief Executive Officer/Secretary in his overall plans for modernization and his focus on expected results and performance indicators; deferred its recommendations on all requested reclassifications pending a whole office review of the staffing structure and levels of both the Fund secretariat and the Investment Management Service; approved the staffing requests for Geneva and New York; expressed support for the Fund's re-engineering projects; recommended deferral of the resources requested for an additional P-5 post in the Investment Management Service; and endorsed the Chief Executive Officer/Secretary's proposals regarding office accommodations, suggesting that he look into the possibility of acquiring premises outside the United Nations for the Fund secretariat.

8. The proposed administrative expenses chargeable to the Fund for the biennium 2002-2003, if approved

by the General Assembly, would amount to $74,322,400, consisting of administrative costs of $29,943,800, investment costs of $43,405,100 and audit costs of $973,500. A detailed breakdown by programme and activity of the budget estimates for the biennium 2002-2003 was contained in annex II to the report.

9. Regarding the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/56/7/Add.1), he said that he had taken note of the Advisory Committee's observations on the presentation of the budget document and its request that efforts should be made to streamline future reports. He had noted, with particular satisfaction, the Advisory Committee's warning against artificially constructing a results-based budget for the Fund merely to comply with the format of the United Nations programme budget and its call for the selection of data that was relevant and specific to the Fund's operations and requirements.

10. He expressed regret that the Advisory Committee had recommended that the eight additional posts requested for 2002-2003 for the Fund's Information Management Systems Section, specifically for the re-engineering project, should be established on a temporary basis. The Advisory Committee had perhaps not given adequate consideration to the difficulties of recruiting expert staff on a temporary basis, particularly in the area of information technology.

11. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the Fifth Committee would concur with the recommendation of ACABQ in paragraph 31 of its report that the revised estimates for the biennium 2000-2001 and the proposed appropriation for the biennium 2002-2003 should be approved for the administrative expenses of the Fund, as submitted by the Standing Committee, and that the latter should be authorized to supplement the voluntary contributions to the Emergency Fund by an amount not exceeding $200,000 for the biennium 2002-2003.

12. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of ACABQ (A/56/7/Add.1), drew attention to the recommendation contained in paragraph 31. Regarding the eight additional posts requested for the re-engineering project, he said that the Advisory Committee questioned the Fund's approach. In paragraph 23 of its report, it suggested that the most appropriate course to follow would be to dedicate a certain level of staff resources to the project and, once the project was completed, to decide which of the posts would be retained on a permanent basis as established posts. It proposed that, at the current stage, the eight posts should be established on a temporary basis. He did not believe that the contractual arrangements for the staff concerned would be problematic. The Advisory Committee had, in the past, made a number of recommendations for the adoption of a flexible approach to the recruitment of expert staff in the area of information technology. He failed to see why the Fund secretariat could not take a similar approach to the eight additional posts requested. If the Fund ultimately concluded that those posts were required on a permanent basis, it could make a proposal to that effect. Regarding the presentation of the budget document, he emphasized that future reports should be streamlined and transparent and that the elements contained therein should be in keeping with the Fund's requirements.

13. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) noted the impressive growth in the size and scope of the Fund's operations and in the market value of its assets. Given the Advisory Committee's observation, in paragraph 28 of its report, that it was not convinced that the increase in the provisions for travel was fully warranted and its belief that some economies might be possible, he wondered why it recommended, in paragraph 31, that the proposed appropriation for the biennium 2002-2003 should be approved for the administrative expenses of the Fund, as submitted by the Standing Committee.

14. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee often called for economies with regard to particular provisions without recommending a reduction in the overall level of resources proposed, since it was often not practicable for the Committee to identify a specific amount that could be saved. It would be for the Fund secretariat to administer the provisions for travel in the light of the Advisory Committee's observations and recommendations if the latter were approved by the General Assembly. Any saving from the approach taken by the Fund secretariat would be reflected in the budget performance report.

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Request for a subvention to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research resulting from the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the Institute on the work programme of the Institute for 2002 (A/56/511; A/C.5/56/2)

15. **The Chairman** drew attention to the note by the Secretary-General on the request for a subvention to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) resulting from the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the Institute on the work programme of the Institute for 2002 (A/C.5/56/2).

16. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of ACABQ (A/56/511), said that a provision of $213,000 per annum for the Institute had been included in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 and that it was proposed that the subvention should be maintained at the same level for the period 2002-2003. The Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the proposal. He noted that, while the amount included in programme budgets was for two years, the statute of the Institute required that an annual subvention should be approved by the General Assembly on the basis of a request by the Board of Trustees of the Institute. There had been some discussion as to the adequacy of the subvention. The Advisory Committee's view, as indicated in paragraph 5 of its report, was that any change in the level of the subvention should be proposed in accordance with the relevant articles of the statute of the Institute.

17. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that his delegation endorsed the objectives of the Institute and looked forward to its continuing success. The request for a subvention was an annual ritual. While the United States had supported the activities of the Institute through voluntary contributions, his delegation did not consider subventions from the regular budget to be an appropriate means of funding those activities. He also wondered whether, in the light of the improved financial situation of the Institute, there continued to be a need for a subvention. Subventions were only appropriate in the first few years of an organization's life, if at all, whereas the subvention to UNIDIR seemed to have become embedded in the budget. His delegation therefore urged the Committee not to approve the request.

18. **Ms. Rødsmoen** (Norway) said that Norway strongly supported the work of UNIDIR and had been one of the largest contributors of voluntary funds to the Institute. Her delegation called on the Committee to approve the request for a subvention in line with the Advisory Committee's recommendation. No additional budgetary appropriation would be required, the amount of the subvention having remained unchanged for several years.

19. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) said that his delegation endorsed the comments just made by the representative of Norway. The work of UNIDIR was extremely important. The Committee should proceed as in the past and approve the request for a subvention.

20. **Mr. Fox** (Australia) said that his delegation also fully supported the work of the Institute. However, it questioned whether the subvention should be granted on an annual basis and wished to pursue the matter further in informal consultations.

21. **Mr. Chandra** (India) said that India had long supported the work of the Institute and would continue to do so. Given that the amount of the subvention was the same as in the period 1996-1997, it was not clear to him why it now covered the costs of only one and a half posts, whereas, in the past, it had covered three posts.

22. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, while the amount of the annual subvention had remained the same, its value, in terms of what it was able to fund, had declined. That was why some had proposed that the amount of the subvention should be increased.

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001 (A/56/518; A/C.5/56/4)

23. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, supported the programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the resources that had been proposed for it. The Group of 77 and China would welcome the views of the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division on the impact of the

opinion contained in paragraph 9 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/56/518) that the current arrangements for financing accommodations for the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests should continue in the biennium 2002-2003 and that such additional requirements as might arise should be indicated in the performance reports for 2002-2003.

24. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, as a result of the shortage of available office accommodation at Headquarters, requests for the approval of new posts were usually accompanied by an associated request for the rental of office space. Accommodation had already been identified at Headquarters, however, and it would therefore be possible to accommodate the new staff within existing space. If that were not the case, it would be reported in the first performance report for the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47: The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects
(A/56/644; A/C.5/56/13)

25. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47 (A/56/644), recalled that the two new posts (one P-4 and one General Service) had been requested in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. In its first report on the proposed programme budget (A/56/7), the Advisory Committee had indicated that, on the basis of the information provided on the programme of work, it was not convinced of the need to establish the two posts at that stage. However, in view of the information contained in the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/13), the Advisory Committee had no objection to the establishment of the two new posts. It recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, expenditure up to $559,800 would be required for the biennium 2002-2003 and that additional appropriation would be considered under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 for the use and operation of the contingency fund.

26. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) asked why the Secretariat had not implemented the language of the draft resolution, which explicitly stated that the activities in question should be carried out from "within existing resources".

27. **Mr. Zhou** Qiangwu (China) supported the proposal for the establishment of the new posts to help ensure the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and endorsed the recommendation contained in paragraph 10 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/56/644).

28. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) said that the appropriation being sought under section 27 D (Office of Central Support Services) for common service costs required further explanation. He would be very surprised if the amount of $59,900 was being sought for office accommodation for two staff members. His delegation noted from paragraph 2 of document A/C.5/56/13 that the Secretary-General had been requested to ensure that resources and expertise were made available to the Secretariat to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action, but that no resources had been requested for the activities of the Department of Public Information in that connection. It was not clear whether that Department had expressed its readiness to carry out the activities requested without additional allocations.

29. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that the Secretary-General's proposal to charge the additional appropriations against the contingency fund was rather odd. According to rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, it was for the Fifth Committee to decide on the sources from which proposed activities were to be financed.

30. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) said that his delegation supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee.

31. **Mr. Albrecht** (South Africa) said that the draft resolution was of particular relevance to African States, which were directly affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. He noted the Secretary-General's statement that it was not possible at the current stage to identify activities within section 4 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium and agreed with the proposal that the additional provision should represent a charge against the contingency fund.

32. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said, with reference to the use of the wording "within existing resources" in the draft resolution, that it was not appropriate for draft resolutions emanating from other Main Committees to provide for the methods by which proposed activities should be funded. That was for the Fifth Committee to recommend to the General Assembly. The Secretary-General would then determine whether it was possible to implement the proposed activity from within existing resources.

33. No provision had been made under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 in relation to the Programme of Action. At the current stage, notwithstanding the use of the wording "within existing resources" in the draft resolution, those requirements could not be absorbed within the existing resources under section 4 (Disarmament) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. In paragraph 7 of its report (A/56/644), the Advisory Committee had recognized the position which the Secretary-General had taken on the matter. Clearly, if the proposals could be implemented within existing resources, that would be done. To avoid disappointment in the future, however, it was necessary to indicate from the outset when it would not be possible to stay within existing resources. He wished to add that the additional requirements of $559,800 were not only for office space but also for telephones, furniture and fixtures and computer connections. Costs had been calculated on a standard basis.

34. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that, while he had noted the reply of the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division to his earlier question, he still failed to understand why the request to carry out an activity from within existing resources was not being given the weight it deserved as an integral part of the General Assembly's mandate. His delegation would return to the issue at a later stage.

35. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) said he was shocked that the cost of accommodating two additional staff members should be nearly $60,000. He would draw the Committee's attention in that regard to the comments of the Joint Inspection Unit about the irrational allocation of space within the Secretariat.

36. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that it was the urgent request of the Union that consideration of the statements of programme budget implications should not be taken up in informal consultations until all of them were in hand and available for consideration.

37. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that there were two ways for the Committee to proceed with the statements of programme budget implications. The procedure followed by the Fifth Committee in the past had been not to delay action by the General Assembly on the work of its Main Committees. The Fifth Committee therefore informed the General Assembly that, if it were to adopt a draft resolution, the programme budget implications would potentially amount to a certain level. The actual appropriation would then be considered by the General Assembly in the light of a consolidated statement prepared by the Secretary-General, which would go first to the Fifth Committee and then to the General Assembly in the context of the Fifth Committee's report on the proposed programme budget itself. That procedure allowed the General Assembly to approve the reports of the Main Committees but to defer approval of the ultimate level of resources to be appropriated.

38. If the Fifth Committee were to consider all the statements together, the President of the General Assembly would have to be consulted regarding the timing of the Assembly's review of the various reports from the Main Committees. A number of Committees had already concluded their work and it might not be appropriate for the Fifth Committee to appear to be delaying acceptance by the General Assembly of the reports of the other Main Committees.

39. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he had a firm mandate from the group on whose behalf he spoke. The Fifth Committee, which had sometimes been put in embarrassing situations by other Main Committees, must take seriously its responsibilities under rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. All the statements of programme budget implications should be available before informal consultations could take place on them. In their absence, the European Union would be unable to participate in the consultations.

40. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that her delegation agreed with the advice given by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and felt that if the Committee

were to wait until all the programme budget implications for the matters on the agenda were available it might unduly hold up the work of the Committee.

41. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) recalled the statement made by his delegation on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to the effect that the Committee should consider the programme budget implications of items on which it had to make a decision as and when they were made available by the substantive committees in order not to delay unduly the work of the General Assembly and in order not to put the Fifth Committee under time pressure at a late stage. He therefore believed that the programme budget implications should be considered in a manner consistent with established procedure as the Chairman had proposed and as scheduled in the Committee's work programme. The function of the other substantive committees was to consider programme activities and to refer the programme budget implications to the Fifth Committee. There had been only one instance during the current session in which a substantive committee had considered matters that were properly within the competence of the Fifth Committee. His delegation was grateful to the Secretary-General for drawing attention to that in document A/C.5/56/13, which referred in that connection to General Assembly resolution 45/248 B and to the report of the Advisory Committee (A/54/7).

42. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) said that the comments that had been made were very helpful to the Committee's work. It should be pointed out that, where the work of the General Assembly was delayed because the consideration of programme budget implications was held up, that was generally the result of the slowness of other committees in referring the programme budget implications to the Fifth Committee. His delegation felt that the Committee should review all the programme budget implications in a comprehensive manner in the context of the overall budget, even if that meant waiting until all the programme budget implications were available.

43. **Mr. Albrecht** (South Africa) said that his delegation appreciated the advice of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee but regretted that that advice was not always taken seriously by some groups. He asked how soon the Fifth Committee could expect a consolidated list of activities with programme budget implications from the Secretary-General. He also felt that the statement made by one delegation that it would not participate in informal discussions of programme budget implications until all of them were available set a dangerous precedent. It was for the Fifth Committee to finalize its budget deliberations as soon as possible.

44. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, contrary to what had just been stated, his delegation took the recommendations and advice of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee very seriously and had taken careful note of what had been said by all delegations. However, the European Union continued to have difficulty with the consideration of programme budget implications before they were all available for discussion.

45. **Mr. Zhou** Qiangwu (China) said that his delegation supported the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and considered that the discussion on programme budget implications should not be further delayed. Like the delegation of South Africa, his delegation wished to know when the Committee could expect to receive the full set of programme budget implications.

46. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) expressed her delegation's concern over the proposal to postpone the study of programme budget implications that were already available to the Committee. That decision was likely to cause a certain instability and lack of predictability in the Committee's work and create problems connected with its consideration of other matters later in the session.

47. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the date on which the Secretariat would be submitting programme budget implications would depend on the status of work in the other Main Committees and in the plenary Assembly. The Second Committee was currently discussing the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, science and technology and sustainable development, all of which might have substantive implications. In terms of timing, two items to be discussed in the plenary Assembly, namely Afghanistan and the United Nations Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), which were due to be taken up in the second, or early in the third, week in December, were probably of greater significance. On that basis it would seem unlikely that a comprehensive set of programme budget implications could be made

available earlier than the middle of the third week of December.

48. **The Chairman** said that, in view of the positions taken by the various delegations on the issue of whether consideration of programme budget implications should be held over until they were all available or whether the Committee should discuss them as and when they became available, he felt that the best course of action would be for the Committee to consider the programme budget implications of the other draft resolutions listed for discussion during the current meeting and for the Bureau to adopt a position on the matter just after the close of the meeting. The outcome of the Bureau's discussions on the issue would be reported to the Committee for a final decision at a meeting the following morning.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.6/Rev.1, as orally revised: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/C.5/56/15)

49. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.6/Rev.1, as orally revised, the General Assembly would invite the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the host country, to continue the information campaign for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held in April 2002. In the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/56/15), the Secretary-General proposed an estimate of $195,000, comprising four work-months of general temporary assistance at the P-3 level ($45,000) and the public information activities set out in paragraph 6 of the statement ($150,000).

50. The Advisory Committee had already noted that no resources had been proposed under section 26, Public information, for information activities associated with special meetings and conferences scheduled for 2002-2003 and that additional requirements would be sought through statements of programme budget implications (A/56/7, para. VII.2). Since the amount proposed was small in comparison to the resources available to the Department of Public Information and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and in view of the importance of publicity for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General should be authorized to carry out fully the related public information activities set out in his statement. Such additional appropriation as might be required would be considered by the General Assembly in the context of the first budget performance report for the biennium 2002-2003.

51. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, referred to the awkward situation in which some committees found themselves and said that some strong doubts had been expressed in the meeting of the Committee that had dealt with the Second World Assembly on Ageing as to whether the activity was or was not a priority and as to what should be done with regard to the publicity campaign connected to it. The intervention of the Secretariat had provided some clarification but there was still some ambiguity, in particular with regard to the interpretation of resolutions 45/248 B and 41/213. There had appeared to be no choice but to accept the activity as such or reject it, without any possibility of giving an opinion on the prioritization of activities. The European Union would consider the programme budget implications of the preparations for the Second World Assembly on Ageing with the necessary rigour.

52. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that his delegation attached considerable importance to the preparations for the Second World Assembly on Ageing and asked why the amounts in the statement of programme budget implications were not in the proposed budget. That appeared to indicate a lack of transparency in the budget process. He agreed with the Chairman of the Advisory Committee that the amounts involved were relatively small in comparison with the amounts available to the Department of Public Information and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and he therefore believed that the activities should be carried out within the proposed resource allocation. As the representative of Belgium had indicated on behalf of the European Union, it appeared from the statement of programme budget implications that there was a need for the Secretariat to prioritize.

53. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) said that his Government supported the Second World Assembly on Ageing. He noted that the General Assembly at its previous session had adopted resolution 55/58 in which it invited the

Department of Public Information to launch an information campaign for the Second World Assembly on Ageing (para. 6) and welcomed the establishment by the United Nations programme on ageing of the Internet-accessible database on policies and programmes on ageing (para. 7). He noted that, on the basis of that resolution, the Department of Public Information had already undertaken public information activities in connection with the forthcoming World Assembly on Ageing. Some resources were therefore already available and his delegation asked why additional resources were needed for further public information activities.

54. **Mr. Fox** (Australia) noted that, in the statement of the programme budget implications of the draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons provision was made for the absorption of the additional cost being sought, while there was no corresponding provision in the statement of the programme budget implications of preparations for the Second World Assembly on Ageing. He asked the Secretariat what potential there was for absorption of the cost within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

55. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division), responding to a question concerning the transparency of the budget process, drew attention to section 26 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (para. 26.6), which referred to a reduction of $3.1 million compared with the revised appropriation for 2000-2001, which reflected the effect of a discontinuation of the non-recurrent portion of the 2000-2001 appropriation, relating mainly to special conferences. That reduction was due to the fact that there would be no mandate for such conferences in the forthcoming biennium. Paragraph 26.9 stated that the level of resource requirements did not include any provision for the information activities associated with special meetings and conferences to be scheduled for the biennium 2002-2003 and that, should the Department of Public Information be required to carry out promotional and informational activities specific to those meetings and conferences, the necessary requirements would be sought through the presentation of statements of programme budget implications. That was the basis for the statement of the programme budget implications of the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/C.5/56/15); it related to a very specific mandate contained in paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.6/Rev.1, as orally revised, whereby the General Assembly would invite the Department of Public Information to continue, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the host country, the information campaign for the Second World Assembly on Ageing. It was in response to that that the Secretariat had made the proposal for an additional $195,000 for the biennium 2002-2003 so as to be in a position to support the World Assembly on Ageing in matters of public information.

56. With respect to the possibility of the absorption of costs, he said that the proposal in the document had been put forward since the Secretariat saw no possibility of such absorption in advance of the biennium. It had been noted, however, that the Advisory Committee had indicated that the activity should be the subject of an attempt to absorb costs. The Secretariat would therefore report back later in the context of the first performance report and would indicate at that stage to what extent it had been successful in absorbing the costs of the information campaign within existing resources and whether additional appropriations would be required.

57. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) asked why the substantive department did not require additional funding for what was a newly mandated activity while the Department of Public Information did. He also said that his delegation's reading of section 26 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 was that the work of the Department of Public Information involved the preparation of public information products such as press kits, background articles, fact sheets, brochures, the posting of information on the United Nations web site and on the local web sites of United Nations information centres. Most of those activities were part of the everyday work of the Department of Public Information in promoting the goals and purposes of the United Nations and he felt that the Department should cover them within existing resources by prioritizing its work to focus on the forthcoming World Assembly on Ageing.

58. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the question was really about why the cost of the additional activities could not be absorbed. Broadly speaking, two approaches to budgeting were possible: on the one hand, an appropriation could be made available within which the costs of all activities were to be absorbed or, on the

other, individual mandates could be itemized and priced and indicated as programme budget implications with specific related appropriations. The former approach had been used in connection with conference services and the latter with regard to other activities. If the Secretariat had been using the generalized approach with regard to the Department of Public Information, the $3.1 million, which had been in the resource base of the budget for the 2000-2001 biennium and which related specifically to the support of general conferences would not have been surrendered. It was because of the approach involving itemizing as and when specific conferences required public information support that the Secretariat had been following the process of itemizing them in the programme budget implications and also surrendering related resources as and when those conferences no longer required support.

59. A question had also been asked about the support under section 9 of the proposed programme budget relating to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. There was a general mandate for the Secretary-General to prepare for the World Assembly on Ageing and on that basis he had been able to make preparations and incorporate the substantive work to be done with regard to the activity within the initial proposals for section 9. That had not been the case with regard to public information, for which a specific mandate was required; that mandate was now provided in draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.6/Rev.1, as orally revised.

60. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) pointed out that paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.6/Rev.1, as orally revised, used the same language as paragraph 6 of resolution 55/58 adopted the previous year and said that his delegation did not understand why paragraph 8 of the draft resolution was regarded as producing a new specific mandate.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.31: Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (A/C.5/56/21)

61. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.31, the General Assembly would request the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to convene, before the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights, a second expert meeting pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/151 to continue studying and updating the international legislation and to make recommendations for a clearer legal definition of mercenaries.

62. According to the statement of the programme budget implications (A/C.5/56/21), the cost of implementing that mandate was estimated at $218,300, comprising estimates of $19,600 for general temporary assistance and $44,500 for travel and subsistence expenses for 10 academic experts under section 22, Human rights, and $154,200 for conference services under section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that the adoption of the draft resolution would give rise to expenditure not exceeding $64,100 and that additional appropriations would be considered by the General Assembly in accordance with the procedures set out in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 for the use and operation of the contingency fund.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.26: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/C.5/56/16)

63. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, under draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.26, the General Assembly would decide, inter alia, to authorize the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to hold, on an exceptional basis, an extraordinary session of three weeks' duration in 2002 in order to reduce the backlog of reports, and to enlarge the membership of the pre-sessional working group in 2002 in order to prepare for that session.

64. According to the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/56/16), the extraordinary session and the enlargement of the pre-sessional working group would give rise to additional requirements under section 9, Economic and social affairs, of $236,700 for the travel and per diem expenses of the 23 members of the Committee and $16,200 for the per diem expenses of the additional members of the pre-sessional working group. Conference-servicing requirements were estimated, on a full-cost basis, at $3,430,600; however, as the statement indicated, provision had been made

under section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services, not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparation, but also for meetings authorized subsequently, and that, as a result, no additional appropriation would be required under that section.

65. Representatives of the Secretary-General had briefed the Advisory Committee on the backlog of reports submitted by States parties to the Convention and had informed it that the reports often exceeded 100 pages in length, since the volume of documentation which States parties could submit was not limited. While article 20 of the Convention limited to two weeks per year the amount of time in which the Committee could examine those reports, an amendment to that article was pending. Currently, the Committee held two three-week sessions per year in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/68, whereby the additional meeting time had been approved for an interim period starting in 1997. If the draft resolution was adopted, the Committee's total meeting time in 2002 would be nine weeks.

66. The Advisory Committee felt that the expected elimination of the backlog might be temporary unless the Committee reformed its methods of work, including its reporting procedures, and adopted guidelines on the length of States parties' reports. Such guidelines should limit the length of the reports and streamline their structure and content. The Advisory Committee also recommended that, if additional meeting time proved necessary in the future, the Committee should consider extending its sessions instead of holding additional sessions, since that would result in savings on items such as travel costs. Bearing in mind those comments, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.26, expenditure not exceeding $252,900 would arise under section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, and that additional appropriations would be considered by the General Assembly in accordance with the procedures set out in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 for the use and operation of the contingency fund.

67. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the comments of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the statement of programme budget implications contained in document A/C.5/56/16 and agreed with the Advisory Committee's view that the implementation of the resolution, assuming that the programme budget implications were approved, might not necessarily lead to the elimination of the backlog that was the original reason for the resolution. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women needed first to reform its methods of work, which had created the backlog to begin with; additional meetings using the same methods of work that had produced the backlog would not resolve the issue. His delegation would probably have more to say on the matter in the informal discussions but wished to state for the record that the statement of programme budget implications did not serve its intended purpose.

68. **Mr. Chandra** (India) said that his delegation had taken note of the Advisory Committee's recommendation with respect to the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.26. It recognized the importance of the work of the treaty bodies and hoped that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women would streamline its methods of work so that the need for an extraordinary session would not arise again.

69. The growing tendency of other Main Committees to state their views on budgetary matters was a disconcerting development. The Chairman of the Fifth Committee should bring that issue to the attention of the President of the General Assembly and should reiterate the principle, contained in a number of General Assembly resolutions, that the Fifth Committee was the Main Committee with responsibility for administrative and budgetary matters. Also disturbing was the general tendency within the Fifth Committee to request a given body to undertake additional activities without providing it with appropriate funding, as in the case of the public information activities for the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.7: Special session of the General Assembly on children (A/C.5/56/18)

70. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, under draft resolution A/56/L.7, the General Assembly would decide to convene a special session on children from 8 to 10 May 2002, the

special session having been postponed from the originally scheduled dates of 19 to 21 September 2001 in the wake of the events of 11 September. According to the statement of the programme budget implications (A/C.5/56/18), the cost of the special session was estimated at $564,100 for conference servicing on the basis of the assumptions outlined in paragraph 3 of the statement, which indicated that the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services would have considerable difficulty in accommodating the special session, owing to the very full calendar of meetings in 2002, and that other mandated bodies scheduled to meet at around the same time would be affected. The Advisory Committee requested that information and explanations concerning the possible additional costs mentioned in paragraph 3 (a) (vii) of the statement should be included in the first performance report for the biennium 2002-2003.

71. Non-conference-servicing costs were estimated at $539,400, including $147,000 under section 26, Public information, the details of which were given in annex I of the statement; $236,200 under section 27D, Office of Central Support Services, the details of which were given in annex II; $20,200 for protocol services, as explained in annex III; and $136,000 for travel of representatives, as explained in paragraph 4 of the statement. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that the adoption of the draft resolution would give rise to non-conference-servicing costs not exceeding $539,400 under section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination, section 26, Public information, and section 27D, Office of Central Support Services, and that additional appropriations would be considered by the General Assembly in accordance with the procedure set out in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 for the use and operation of the contingency fund.

72. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba), supported by **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico), said that the oral reports introduced by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee during the meeting should be published as official documents for consideration by the Committee.

73. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) asked how much of the preparatory work for the special session, which had originally been scheduled for September 2001, had already been completed. He also asked for an explanation of the discrepancy between the two estimates for the rental of cellular telephones given in annex II and annex III.

74. **Mr. Zhou** Qiangwu (China) said that he was concerned about the conference-servicing difficulties mentioned in paragraph 3 (a) (vii) of the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/18) and asked whether those difficulties would create budgetary problems. He also wished to know the amount of voluntary contributions received for the conduct of the special session.

75. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) said that, while some of the additional requirements listed in the Secretary-General's statement were clearly justified, such as the cost of additional security officers, he failed to understand the need for the many items mentioned in annex II, paragraphs 1 (b), 2 and 3, since the special session was to last only one week. Annex I, paragraph 1 (b), indicated an amount of $10,000 in "seed money" for United Nations information centres; since there were some 50 or 60 such centres, the amount to be allocated to each of them seemed insignificant, and he wondered what they were expected to do with the funds and whether the money would really be spent to help meet the objectives of the special session.

76. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, as at the current time, the Secretariat did not believe that an additional appropriation for language resources would be needed in connection with the special session, despite the strains on the Organization's conference-servicing capacity. However, the need for additional capacity in other areas was real, particularly with respect to security. The items listed in annex II, paragraphs 1 (b) and 2 (d), were for the use of security personnel. He would provide details at a later date with respect to the two estimates given for the rental of cellular telephones.

77. The estimate of $147,000 for public information included $106,000 for coverage of the special session and $41,000 for promotional activities; the latter amount had been computed taking into account the work already undertaken and the support provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for activities in that area. UNICEF had received between $1.1 and $1.6 million in voluntary contributions, but those funds were not available to cover the needs in the areas of public information, central support services and protocol mentioned in the Secretary-General's

statement. The pattern of resources being sought was based on recent experience with other high-profile events such as the Millennium Assembly.

78. **The Chairman** said that the Bureau would meet to discuss the procedure for considering statements of programme budget implications and would inform the Committee of its conclusions the following day.

79. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Committee had already begun to consider programme budget implications in its informal consultations and that all statements of programme budget implications should receive the same treatment in the Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

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Summary record of the 32nd meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Organization of work

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to the Committee's revised programme of work for the current week, under which informal consultations on all the statements of programme budget implications previously taken up by the Committee and on those previously scheduled for consideration on Friday, 7 December 2001, in the morning, had been rescheduled for Friday afternoon. He trusted that those adjustments met all the concerns which had been raised at the preceding meeting, and took it that the Committee wished to proceed in accordance with the revised programme of work.

2. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.